

Excavating Old Jericho---Walls of Joshua's City Are Being Uncovered---Where Bears Ate Babies and Elijah Was Fed by Ravens



A ROCK WHICH CURES LUMBAGO.

BY FRANK G. CARPENTER, Jericho.

Have you heard of the excavations which the Austrians are making away out here on the edge of the Jordan? They have discovered the site of old Jericho, and are digging up the walls which fell down at the blast of Joshua's trumpet. The place is just about fourteen miles from Jerusalem as the crow flies. It lies on a little plateau, right under the mountain upon which it is said our Lord was tempted by the devil and promised the world. It is about three miles from the present town of Jericho, where I am stopping, and within easy access of it by foot, horse or carriage. I have spent a day with the excavators, and have seen the ruins, and the Austrians have laid down a railway to carry the dirt out to the side of the walls. They are using steel cars, pushed by hand. They are finding all sorts of relics and are unearthing new historical facts.

The work began about three years ago under the Austrian ministry of education, and the uncovering of the mounds showed the remains of a great fortress city, which was undoubtedly the Jericho of Canaan. This lies on a plateau, surrounded by great walls, some of which are of stone. It is said that the city was about 1,200 feet long and 525 feet wide.

The Houses of Old Jericho.

Many of the houses have been unearthed. I have walked through streets which were in use when Moses and the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness, and have tramped up and down staircases of clay which were built hundreds of years before Christ. In one of the buildings, which is supposed to have been made 2,700 years ago, there was found an uncovered courtyard. The house seems to have been abandoned during a fire, and for some reason or other it was left in a better condition than the others. It contained a red sandstone mill for meal grinding, and water vessels of various shapes. Had plates and jugs and also lamps and iron vessels with handles of deer horn.

In going through the ruins I tramped over bushes of pottery broken in places. I saw jars clipped and cracked. They had been buried as a tomato, with a hole through the center. There are hundreds of these corks lying on the ground. There are also stone mortars which were used for grain grinding, and the remains of amphorae, or huge jars with necks and side handles, which were buried in the earth and kept to hold wine or grain. The most of the pottery is covered with a white glaze, and some of it has vertical stripes of yellow painted upon it.

As to the buildings, the stone walls are built without mortar, the cracks being filled in with smaller stones. The work was done with tools of bronze, and some of it dates back beyond history. The heart of the city is on an egg-shaped plateau just above the plain of the Jordan. So far about \$8,000 has been expended on the work.

A Magnificent City.

It is difficult in wandering through these ruins of mud, brick and rough stone to realize that Jericho was a magnificent city. The one of Joshua was not so in our sense of the word, although it covered a large area and was thickly populated. There are no remnants of great marble columns, and it is said that Jericho had disappeared long before Christ came and that another had taken its place situated in this same Jordan valley. The Jericho of Christ had a theatre, a circus and a university. It ranked with Jerusalem as one of the important places in Palestine. It was surrounded by irrigated gardens, and was known as the city of palms. It had grown up



I STOPPED AT BETHANY TO LOOK AT LAZARUS'S TOMB.

In Roman times, and Mark Antony thought so much of it that he gave it as a present to Cleopatra, who collected quite a revenue from the balsam groves near there which furnished the gum of commerce. Cotton was raised here at that time, and this region was then a fertile plain for Jerusalem. Had the great had palace in Jericho, and it is said that he died here, and that he was buried somewhere near Hebron.

We know that our Saviour came to Jericho, and here He healed the blind. He did not stay in the city, but dwelt outside in the house of Zachaeus, who was a collector of taxes for the Roman government, and therefore not popular with the Jews. I tell you Zachaeus the dwarf. He was so short he feared he would not be able to see the Christ over the heads of the crowd, and, as you remember from the verses in the old primer,

Did climb a tree,
His Lord to see."

City of Joshua and Rahab.

These old ruins represent not the city of Christ's time, but the one of Joshua and Rahab. You remember Rahab the fair lady who was not so good as she should be, who lived upon the walls of Jericho, and who hid Joshua's spies under the stalks of flax which she had stored up on her roof. She told them of the terror which prevailed in the city over the possible invasion of Joshua, and made them promise to save her when Jericho was taken. The spies arranged with her that she should tie the same red thread to the bars of her window when her house would be spared. She then let them down by a cord through the window, and they escaped and reported to Joshua. That was a good day's work for Rahab. That promise of the spies was carried out

by the Israelites, and Rahab was not only preserved, but she married one of the princes of Judah, a man named Salmon, and thereby became one of the most famous women of the ancestral tree of the Israelites. She was the mother of Boaz, who was the husband of Ruth, and King David was one of her great-great-grandchildren.

On the next step of her genealogical ladder we find King Solomon, and by tracing the centuries comes the name of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and of the family of Christ. In the first chapter of Matthew you will find the generations from Abraham to the birth of our Saviour, and in them are mentioned the names of only four women, namely, Thamar, Rahab, Ruth and Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, who had been the wife of Uriah.

At the Fountain of Elisha.

Right under old Jericho where these people are working is the fountain of Elisha which the prophet made sweet by throwing an ass's head in it. It is not far from the spot where he was mocked by the children who cried after him, "Go up, thou bald head." "Thereupon," says the Scriptures, "the prophet turned and cursed them in the name of the Lord. And there came forth two she bears out of the woods and tore forty and two children of them."

It is said that the place where Elijah was carried up in a whirlwind to heaven was not far from Jericho, and on my way down here from Jerusalem I saw the cave in which that prophet is said to have been fed by ravens. It is in the Wadi el-Kelt, a great dry rocky canyon with walls many feet high. The cave is a few miles from Jericho, half way up the side of the gorge, and is partly hidden by a monastery which the Greeks have built at that place.

In the Wilderness of Judea.

But let me tell you how I came down to Jericho. The way from Jerusalem out through the wilderness of Judea.

I HAD A TURKISH SOLDIER TO KEEP OFF ROBBERS.

One of the roughest and stoniest lands of the world. There is but little green to be seen and the glare is intense. The dust of the road is of limestone and chalk, and is so thick that it gets into your eyes, mouth and nostrils. The road is the chief highway from the Jordan to the Holy City, and it is traveled by thousands. The traffic was even greater in the time of Christ, for the Jordan valley was then covered with irrigated farms and the rich men of Jerusalem had their winter homes here.

I left Jerusalem in a carriage, going out through the Damascus gate, crossing the valley of Jehoshaphat and skirting the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives. A little further on we passed a slaughter house in which all the animals eaten in Jerusalem are killed, and then, mounting the hills, came to the village of Bethany.

My carriage was an easy victoria drawn by three Arabian horses, and the coachman was a Syrian Jehu, with a long and a face as fair as mine own. I had a Turkish soldier with me to keep off the robbers. He was furnished by the government of Jerusalem at a cost of \$3, and is under the direct command of the sheik here at Jericho. This soldier carried a gun and a sword, and he goes ahead, nominally to clear the road. Every party I met on the way had similar soldiers, and this included the Russian pilgrims as well as the hunters from Jerusalem on their way for game in the lands beyond the Jordan.

At the Tomb of Lazarus.

I stopped at Bethany to look at Lazarus's tomb, and as I did so was reminded of what Mark Twain said, namely: "That he would rather sleep in the tomb than in any other house in the place." The Bethany of to-day is a dirty, ragged village of forty or fifty stone houses, inhabited perhaps by 300 people. The houses stand on the side of a hill being built one over the other. The people are small farmers who have patches of stony land and the orchards of olives and figs. They have cows and make butter for Jerusalem. They are not all Mohammedans, and all beggars crying for alms.

Entering the town I took a look at the tomb. It is a sort of cavern cut out of limestone and entered by steep steps. It belongs to the Franciscan monks, and they often say mass there. The bones of Mary and Martha, in which Christ stopped, are said to have been in an enclosure which is now full of brambles and wild cactus. There is no building left, although the guide point out a pile of stones which they say was once a part of the wall.

On the way to Bethany I was shown the site of the fig tree which was cursed by the Saviour, and from then on never bore fruit. There are many fig trees about, and orchards of them are to be found in most parts of the Holy Land. It was on the road to Bethany that Christ mounted the colt which carried Him on his triumphant march to Jerusalem.

A Rock Which Cures Lumbago.

Shortly after I left Bethany I saw a curious sight by the roadside. This was a man leaning backward over a great gray boulder, and rubbing himself violently upon it. There were some stones on top of the rock and I observed that the man added another stone to the pile. I asked my guide the secret of his actions. He replied: "That stone is called the father of rocks, and it is said to be a sure cure for lumbago and backache. The people here think that any one so afflicted will be cured if he can rub his sore spot against it. I am told that those who believe in the cure can rub themselves into a state of good health."

The Good Samaritan Inn. A little farther on I stopped for a

THE NEW JERICO.

bottle of ginger pop and a crocker at the Good Samaritan Inn, which stands on the traditional site where lay the man who fell among thieves, when the Pharisee passed him by on the other side. It is right on the road about half way from Jerusalem to Jericho. There was a crowd in the inn while I waited, and among them a Syrian peasant, who had been robbed by a party of Bedouins. The man was covered with wounds, and was crying and sobbing as he told how he was attacked, and the money which he had just received from the sale of some sheep stolen from him. This country is very unsafe, and no one who has money dares travel alone. All the way to the Jordan I had met with little caravans on their way to Jerusalem. In every party there was some men with guns on their backs. The guns were often old-fashioned flintlock muskets. I passed some donkey trains taking loads of charcoal from beyond the Jordan, and a caravan of camels, each of which bore two great bags of wheat slung over his back. The drivers of both donkeys and camels were armed. They had come from the land of Moab, and were now going up through Judea.

The Mount of Olives in 1910.

I spent several hours on my way to the Jordan. This mountain is 200 feet higher than the hills upon which Jerusalem stands. It is directly opposite Jerusalem, being separated from it by the valley of Jehoshaphat or Kedron.

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and it can be easily reached on horse-back, by carriage or on foot. There are good wagon roads up the Mount of Olives, and most of the holy places are now visited by carriages.

The Mount of Olives is rapidly changing with the prosperity which is coming to Palestine. Its slopes are now cultivated, the rocks are being picked up and laid in stone fences, and the cleared spots planted to crops and to orchards. There were many olive orchards on the mount in the days of the Saviour, and He came here frequently to get away from the crowds of the city. The soil seems fertile, and the crops upon the mountain grow luxuriantly. There are many green patches of wheat, barley and oats, and here and there are carob trees, on which hang the pods which furnished the food for the prodigal son when he ate with the swine.

Among the Carmelite Nuns.

The Mount of Olives is now spotted with churches and chapels. It has monasteries and convents, a great Russian church and several houses. The one which is now being built by Augusta, the Empress of Germany. One of the most interesting of these institutions is a Carmelite nunnery, which has been built over the spot where tradition says Christ taught the Lord's Prayer to His disciples. The church is called "The Church of the Lord's Prayer," and it has in its court tablets inscribed with the prayer in thirty-two different languages. I visited the chapel of the nunnery, where prayers go up every day and night, and every hour of the day all the year through. The nuns so divide their time that one is always praying. They kneel behind a screen and are not to be seen by visitors. This church is one of the quietest and most solemn of all in the Holy Land, and it is a relief to enter it, coming from the noisy scenes which take place about the Holy Sepulchre.

The Carmelite nuns are devout. They do not go out of the nunnery, except if they are absolutely necessary, and when they walk in its garden they wear such hats as to tell that they have to enter it, coming from the noisy scenes which take place about the Holy Sepulchre.

The garden of the nunnery, except if they are absolutely necessary, and when they walk in its garden they wear such hats as to tell that they have to enter it, coming from the noisy scenes which take place about the Holy Sepulchre.

The Garden of Gethsemane.

I shall not take you to the Chapel of the Ascension near the nunnery, nor show you the spot in its floor which looks like a footprint, and is said to be where the foot of the Saviour rested before He ascended to heaven.

BEST BUILDING LIME.



Slakes perfectly--sets its own--will not dip on walls.

The chapel belongs to the Mohammedans and is let out at times to the Christians. It will be more interesting for us to visit the Garden of Gethsemane, which lies at the foot of the Mount of Olives, just off the Jericho road. It is surrounded by a wall of yellow limestone, twelve feet in height and about four feet in thickness. On the outside of it in the shade of the wall a score of lepers hold out their hands for alms as we pass. They are dirty and lily and the disease has made them disgusting. Some have no fingers, some no noses and one holds out a tin can which is tied to the stump of her wrist, the hand having dropped off.

The garden goes up the side of the mountain. It is almost square, with a width of something like 300 feet. It does not cover two acres, and is cut up into flower beds, bordered by inverted beer and wine bottles. It has eight old olive trees, pantries of all shades of the rainbow, and other beautiful flowers. There are also cypress trees. The garden belongs to the Franciscan monks, who open the gate as we knock. The gate is a mere hole in the wall, so low that all who enter must stoop. It is closed by an iron door, upon which a round black iron bar, ten inches long, serves as a knocker.

Just back of the entrance to the garden is a ledge of limestone upon which the disciples are said to have slept during the night of the agony, and perhaps 100 feet farther away stands a column which tradition says marks the spot where Judas betrayed Christ with a kiss. Both of these places have been worn smooth by the lips of thousands of pilgrims.

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